

ELA Nonfiction Unit

“Modern Definitions of Success”

Summative Assessment

Students will take a multiple-choice assessment and write an argument essay, answering the question, “What is a modern definition of success and how can it be achieved?”

Essential Questions	Enduring Understandings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why read nonfiction? What is unique about nonfiction vs. fiction text? How do I read nonfiction differently than fiction? How does an author create meaning in a non-fiction or informational text? What are the purposes authors have for writing nonfiction texts? How can I use evidence from the text to demonstrate my understanding of that text? How does a reader determine the validity of an informational text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different types of texts have different purposes and structures (fiction vs. nonfiction) Understanding a text’s purpose and structure helps a reader better understand its meaning Effective readers use specific strategies to help them better understand text they are reading Nonfiction writers have specific purposes for writing Sometimes there are contradictory non-fiction pieces with differing evidence/validity

Focus Questions

Week 1: Introduction to Nonfiction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How can I connect personally to a nonfiction text? ❖ How can reading and analyzing non-fiction and informational texts make us better writers of those types of texts? 	Week 2: Summarize, Organize <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How do I sort important from non-important information? ❖ How do I avoid retelling when I summarize? ❖ What questions help me better understand what I read? 	Week 3 : Making Meaning from Nonfiction Text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How do visuals assist my understanding of a text? ❖ How do I approach unknown vocabulary in a nonfiction text? ❖ What role does questioning play in helping me make meaning of text?
Week 4: Summarize, Organize, Synthesize <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Why are organizational patterns essential in the understanding of nonfiction text? ❖ How should we use evidence from the text to show our understanding of that text? ❖ How can I use my personal connection to enhance my argument about a text? 	Week 5: Talking to the Text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Why did the author choose to write this? ❖ What does the writer want me to understand, think or believe? ❖ How does an author create meaning in a non-fiction or informational text? ❖ What reading strategies help us determine meaning from a text? 	Week 6: Author’s Purpose and Perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How does the author’s perspective influence the meaning? ❖ How does an author of informational text/nonfiction use logic, evidence, and rhetorical devices to persuade? ❖ How do persuasive messages, both explicit and implicit, shape our ideas, values, beliefs, and/or behaviors? ❖ How does a reader identify author bias and determine the validity of an informational text?

Student Outcomes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read, discuss, present, and appreciate a variety of nonfiction texts Recognize the defining features and structures of nonfiction texts Skim texts to gain an overall impression and scan texts for particular information Analyze and evaluate non-fiction texts Support ideas/connections with evidence from the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize reading strategies: visualization, inferring, questioning, making connections to other texts and the world Determine the significance and reliability of nonfiction information Summarize, organize and synthesize information from nonfiction and informational texts Produce nonfiction pieces and subsequently revise work to improve its clarity and effectiveness
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Examples of Content-Specific Vocabulary

narrative	expository	explicit	persuasive	central idea
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Nonfiction Unit Overview

Unit Rationale: *Why Read and Write Non-Fiction?*

Non-fiction offers readers information; they are informational texts. Many of the pieces you read daily are nonfiction texts such as newspapers. Nonfiction is an often-ignored genre in schools for many reasons. Teachers and students alike can approach it with dread and trepidation, assuming the reading material will be dry and boring and the writing process will be dull and arduous. However, times have changed and this does not have to be the case. The “right” nonfiction texts can be compelling to read and the writing of a great nonfiction piece can be thrilling, even life-changing.

The demands of today’s technological society require that students be literate in multiple genres. Students should be able to access and understand fiction **and** nonfiction material in print, as well as digital format. According to William Zinsser in *On Writing Well*, “The great preponderance of what writers now write and sell, what book and magazine publishers publish, and what readers demand is nonfiction” (1990, 54). For this and many other reasons, it is critical to give nonfiction a primary place in the curriculum and to encourage formal and recreational nonfiction reading and writing experiences with your students.

- Students may have far less familiarity with nonfiction texts and their underlying structures than with narrative; they need instruction that familiarizes them with nonfiction’s organization and structure.
- If today’s students are to meet the literacy demands of the future, they need to engage in authentic literacy tasks with non-fiction texts.
- Knowledge of the structure of different text genres develops over time for students; older students have greater understanding of different text types than younger students.
- High-stakes tests contain more nonfiction than fiction passages for students to read.
- Nonfiction can provide students opportunities for gaining expertise and creating arguments in various topics.
- The greater students’ awareness of nonfiction and organizational patterns, the better they can follow the author’s message (Hadaway, Vardell & Young, 2002).

Finally, as expressed in the introduction to the Common Core Standards, there is a “need for college and career ready students to be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas. Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content; postsecondary education programs typically provide students with both a higher volume of such reading than is generally required in K–12 schools and comparatively little scaffolding” (*Introduction to the Common Core Standards*, 4).

“Modern Definition of Success”

In today’s society, we are constantly exposed to images of what it means to be successful. From advertisements to self-help manuals to personal stories of triumph, we are offered a wide array of material that defines success and tells us how to achieve it. Although there are common elements present in many of these definitions and “how to” guides, there are also widely differing opinions.



We want our students to grapple with the modern definition of success, answering questions such as, “How has the definition of success changed over time?” “What does success mean to me?” “Is there a problem with the modern definition of success?” “Who are my role models?” We want them to critically contemplate the images and values currently extolled as “successful” by the media, to examine the lives of individuals who have been hailed as models of success and finally to trace the arguments of those who take a stand on what it means to be successful and how to achieve it.

Throughout this unit, we want our students to explore the concept of success, as it exists in the stories of courage and survival (**narrative**), as it is spelled out in self-help pieces and how-to guides (**expository**), and as it is debated about in a variety of forums (**persuasive**). At the beginning of the unit, students will share their initial impressions about what it means to be successful today. What does it “look like?” Is there a different image today than that which existed in the past?” By the end of the unit, they will have formed opinions using text evidence about what the modern definition should be and how to achieve it. **Text evidence** can be direct quotations or paraphrased examples from the text.

Through narrative nonfiction texts such as biographies and memoirs (**Weeks 1 and 2**), students will consider the attributes of individuals that have lead to success. They will investigate nonfiction expository pieces such as the “all-about” and the “how to” (**Weeks 3 and 4**) in order to extract specific and relevant information about the requirements for success. Likewise, they will reflect upon their own willingness and motivation to achieve success in their lives. Finally, they will read nonfiction persuasive texts (**Weeks 5 and 6**) with a critical lens in order to argue for a new definition of success, one that aligns with either a single text or incorporates multiple perspectives about what success means and how to achieve it.

With what is this unit aligned?

In this unit, students should not only gain an appreciation for nonfiction, but they should also acquire the skills to engage at a high level with texts. Towards this end, the unit is aligned with:

- ✓ **ELA Common Core Standards** (abbreviated in each weekly map)

Example:

Addresses the following **Common Core ELA Standards**: RSI1, RSI3, WS 1: a, WS 4

- ✓ **Standard Exams** (included in **bold**)

Instructional tips, activities, assessments, and vocabulary aligned with the Standard Exams are included. The language that is particularly prevalent on this exam is in **bold** in order to encourage frequent use and to equip students with the tools necessary for success.

Example:

- Students will be able to use text evidence to support the **central idea**

What additional resources are provided?

- ✓ **Instructional Materials**

This unit makes use of instructional materials which you currently have available to you. **Teach!** (T), **Principles and Practices** (PP) from Kaplan's *Text Connections*, **When Kids Can't Read** (WKCR), **Strategies that Work** (SW), and **Nonfiction Matters** (NF) have been referenced throughout as additional guides for instructional support.

Example:

During Reading: Use **Character Bulletin Boards** (WKCR, 134) to visualize individuals and gather details about what they think, feel, say and do that makes them successful.

- ✓ **"Teaching Tips"**

In addition to the weekly rationale, you will find "teaching tip" boxes that are meant to offer further guidance and/or enhance the unit.

Example:



For this unit the use of media can be particularly helpful. Using commercials or other forms of advertisement, demonstrate the use of a comprehension skill or strategy without the student having to struggle through the words of a text. This can allow them to learn, practice, and use these strategies when they need to get through a text that is difficult.

- ✓ **Social Emotional Connections**



The weekly maps include suggestions for connecting the objectives to students' social emotional development.

Example:



Reading can be a source of support and it can call upon students to assess their own behaviors and value systems.



- ✓ **Extensions**

Additional objectives and activities are included that are designed to offer greater challenge to students and provide for differentiated instruction. Depending upon the available space, they are located in either the "Possible Activities & Support" or "Possible Assessment" columns.

✓ **Formative and Summative Assessments**

Weekly sample formative assessments are provided and should be used to inform teaching the following week. A culminating summative assessment is included at the end of the unit.

✓ **Vocabulary**

Key literary terms that align with the week's objectives are included at the bottom of the weekly map. A complete list of the content-specific terms  and writing terms  and definitions can be found in the appendix. Vocabulary that are specific to the standard exams are in **bold**.

✓ **Appendix**

The appendix contains information about activities and assessments, graphic organizers and templates, unit-related vocabulary lists, strategies for conferring with students, strategies for guided reading groups and more.

What else should I keep in mind as I teach this unit?

✓ **Reading Strategies**

Throughout this unit, consider referring to the many strategies described in ***When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do (WKCR)***. When students acquire the strategies necessary to engage with the text **before, during** and **after** reading, their independence and motivation to read will increase. Every strategy need not be used every week, nor for every text. However, used appropriately, these methods can serve to guide the dependent, struggling readers in your class toward independence and success, as well as challenge the independent, proficient readers to achieve further mastery. Suggestions for strategies to use for each have been provided for you in the Weekly Rationale and additional reading strategy graphic organizers are included in the Appendix.

Consider also referring to the strategies described in ***Teach!, Principles and Practices, Strategies That Work, Nonfiction Matters***, and ***Nonfiction Craft Lessons*** to support students in accessing and understanding nonfiction texts. For example, **Independent and Paired Reading** (T, 77-159) and **Literature Circles** (T, 262-263) are great methods for having students comprehend and interpret nonfiction text both on their own and with others.

✓ **Quote of the Day:** Consider launching each class with a provocative quotation that connects to the discussion for the day.

Example:

“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.”
- Albert Schweitzer



Suggested Texts

The nonfiction texts in this unit have been selected on the basis of students' interests, as well as in order to align with Common Core and New York State standards, taking into account:

- Text Complexity (See Complete List of Text Suggestions for CCS' method for assessing text)
- Diversity of Interest (Topic, Culture, Gender, etc.)

This Six Week unit is divided into three categories

❖ **Narrative Nonfiction (Weeks 1 and 2 – “Stories of Success”)**

Autobiographical/Biographical accounts that tell stories of real-life events.

Examples: biographies, essays, and journals.

❖ **Expository Nonfiction (Weeks 3 and 4 - “The All-About” and “The How-To”):**

Text written to inform the reader about something or explain something (i.e. how to do something). *Examples: self-help guides, analytical essays, manuals, brochures, maps*

❖ **Persuasive Nonfiction (Weeks 5 and 6 - “The Argument”):**

Presents reasons and evidence to convince the reader to act or think in a certain way.

Examples: editorials, essays, speeches, advertisements

Text Categories

While it is important for students to engage in a shared reading experience throughout the unit, it is also critical for students to have choice, particularly with nonfiction. The shared texts align with the weekly objectives and assessments and can be used to engage students in classroom discussion and debate, while the independent texts allow students the freedom to explore the individuals and topics they find interesting on a personal level.

Each two-week block of the unit is divided into the following three categories of suggested texts:



Hook: Each week begins with a “hook” suggestion. This could be a short text, media clip, poem or other engaging piece that illustrates one or more of the skills for the week and motivates students. Use these pieces as tools for introducing the higher level text suggestions and more advanced concepts each week, and refer back to them as needed.



Shared/Community Text Options: Each week offers a list of optional longer nonfiction texts to be used as shared/community pieces. Use your discretion for text use within the framework of your classroom. Optional uses for instruction include:

- *Shared Reading:* Choose one or more of the texts for each two-week block to read as a classroom community (some contain reading guides or additional support in the Appendix).
- *Literature Circles:* Group students (by choice of text, reading ability, etc.) and have them read two or more of the suggested texts simultaneously.

- *Selected Excerpts:* These texts have been suggested for their capacity to be flexible. They can be read in their entirety or you can choose excerpts that will help your students achieve the weekly objectives and still be accessible to students as stand-alone passages.



If you choose the Literature Circles option, students can “jigsaw” their learning from the selected novels by group, so that there is a shared understanding of each text.



Independent/Project-Based Text Options: Each week provides suggestions for nonfiction pieces that students can explore independently, either in preparation for their project, or simply as a matter of individual interest. *Example:* “Chess for Dummies” along with clip from the film *Bobby Fisher* used to prepare the Teaching Booklet for Week 3 and 4 Project.

Newspapers/Magazines: Consider using newspapers and/or magazine articles throughout the course of the unit. You might open class occasionally with a poignant article or have a weekly “Current Events” day in which you use the articles to spotlight the weekly objectives.

Online: Many newspapers offer online lesson plans and suggested activities, such as *The New York Times*’ “Learning Network” or CNN’s student news, which offers a daily quiz:

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/>

<http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/studentnews/04/14/newsquiz/index.html>



Formative Assessments

The weekly formative assessments are meant to be used as tools for identifying where your students are on “their path to understanding” (T, 443). They are not meant to engender the type of stress typically associated with a summative assessment. Let students know in word and deed that they will be supported in learning the information, even if it means returning to it the following week(s). Analyzing the results of the assessments will allow you to determine which concepts must be re-taught the following week. The nonfiction texts from the previous week’s assessment should also be used as a way to re-teach former objectives, as well as to model the next week’s skills (“Teach and Re-Teach,” T, 448, 459 and “Learning from Student Work,” T, 454).



Engage students in the process of assessment by showing them the weekly rubrics in advance, so that they know exactly what is expected of them. Have them frequently analyze student work (their own and other’s) using the Peer Review Sheet (Appendix) in order to show there is a purpose and audience for their writing.

Additionally, you can use **RAFT** (Role, Audience, Format, Topic) (T, 414) to develop engaging and creative assignments and assessments of your own. Using this method, you can give students a variety of options for responding to a given story.

Example:

Role	Audience	Format	Topic
2 nd Grade Pakistani Student	Greg Mortenson	Thank you letter	Building the first school he has ever attended

Week 1 Rationale: Characteristics of Nonfiction

Introduction

As you launch this unit, it is critical to “hook” your students on nonfiction. Share *your* passion for the genre and model to your students how *you* personally go through the process of reading and writing nonfiction. As Stephanie Harvey writes, “Passion is contagious. Teachers who share their passions develop learners who want to explore theirs” (NM).

The first day or two of the unit should be used to:

- ✓ Introduce the unit in a motivating way (see Pre-Reading Activities)
- ✓ Outline the unit and its goals
- ✓ Set high expectations for students

Pre-Reading Activities:

1) “Street Fair”- Set up baskets or boxes filled with nonfiction books, magazines, newspapers, phone books, brochures, journals, etc. Have students peruse the selections, taking note of the material that interests them most and the particular text features that seem to distinguish nonfiction from fiction at first glance.

2) “What Makes a Good Nonfiction Reader” Chart – As you progress through the unit continue to add to this chart to show students the skills and techniques that will allow them to approach nonfiction text with confidence.

Content Opening Activities:

1) “What is Success?” Brainstorm and chart ideas about success. What does it look like? What does it mean? Who is successful? Return to chart throughout unit to confirm, grapple with, add to, and refute original beliefs.

2) Interview Clip from “The Resident”: “What is Success?” - Engage in a class discussion following the media clip of an interviewer asking various people what their definition of success is.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ozn2H02Euc>

3) Images of Success- Display ads and images that convey different notions of success. Elicit student responses to these images.

Types of Nonfiction

Create a “climate that promotes inquiry” (NM, 42) in your classroom. To the extent that you can, make visible and available for use resources such as “maps, globes, atlases, phone books, newspapers, travel brochures, TV guides, almanacs, the Guinness Book of World Records, calendars, catalogues, museum publications, charts, graphs and tables, books, magazines, thesauruses, dictionaries, encyclopedias, posters” (NM, 44-46).

Expose students to ALL three of the main types of nonfiction at the start of the week (**Narrative, Expository and Persuasive**), highlighting the features of each. We begin the unit with narrative nonfiction because the plot structure is similar to fiction and the skills students

acquire during the close reading of these texts will enable them to read other types of nonfiction more deeply.

Features of Nonfiction vs. Fiction

Students love to browse. Reading nonfiction affords them this opportunity. The first “meeting” with a nonfiction text can involve simply flipping through and just enjoying the photographs, scanning the captions, and then checking out the boxes and bullets that highlight interesting information. This is a pre-reading activity.

Here are some of the features of nonfiction to introduce:

- **Labels** help the reader understand the small parts of a picture.
- **Photographs** help the reader see what the topic looks like.
- **Captions** help the reader understand what they are looking at in a picture.
- **Comparisons** help the reader compare the item to something they are familiar with.
- **Cross Sections** help the reader see what something looks like from the inside.
- **Maps** help the reader know where something is located in the world.
- **Types of Print** help the reader know that the word or words are important.
- **Close-Ups** help the reader see what something looks like from up close.
- **Tables of Contents** help the reader know how the book is organized.
- **Indexes** help the reader find specific information in a book.
- **Glossaries** help the reader understand the definitions of important words in the book.

Also, consider pairing up fiction and nonfiction texts of the same topic and have students compare the features. For example, you might use a narrative excerpt from *Into Thin Air*, paired with an information selection about Mount Everest (with pictures, diagrams, etc.). Create charts or displays that compare/contrast and highlight the features of nonfiction vs. fiction texts.

Example:

Fiction Features	Similar Features	Nonfiction Features

Prior Knowledge/Making Inferences

Students can use much of what they already know about reading fiction to make inferences about and connections with nonfiction texts. When reading expository texts, it helps students to consider all that they already know (**activating prior knowledge**) about a topic to anticipate (making **inferences** and **predictions**) how a text might unfold. They can link their reading to prior experience with texts about similar topics and predict how the text might “go.” If it’s the story of the Andes survivors, they might access any prior knowledge about stories of survival and possibly even information about the Andes. With nonfiction texts, as compared to fiction, students need to “gear up” for reading by getting ready to learn something new about a subject.



Formative Assessment

The Week 1 Formative Assessment reflects all of the concepts and skills that have been taught throughout the week. Although students will not see the story or the *content* of the formative assessment until the end of the week, they should have multiple opportunities to “practice” the *form* of the assessment. Use the same types of questions, graphic organizers, and writing samples with other stories throughout the week, so that students are prepared to succeed.

After administering the assessment, use the provided scoring key and rubric to assess students’ performance. Analyze the results of Week 1 Formative Assessment in order to:

- 1) Identify concepts that need to be re-taught during Week 2 (“Teach and Re-teach,” T, 448, 459).
- 2) Highlight Week 1 examples of exemplary analysis of argument and use of text evidence.
- 3) Introduce the concept of a rubric and demonstrate its use for self and peer assessment.



Suggested Texts (Weeks 1 & 2-Narrative Nonfiction): “Profiles in Success”

Although the beginning of the week focuses on an introduction to ALL three of the main types of nonfiction, introduce students to examples of autobiographies and biographies of extraordinary individuals later in the week.

This type of nonfiction has a plot structure similar to the arch of a fiction story, one that our students should already be familiar with. Characters have traits and motivations, and they face challenges or obstacles as they interact with each other and their environments. Often they overcome these obstacles and emerge triumphant. The complete suggested text list contains motivating profiles in courage, survival, and achievement.



“Street Fair” (Intro to Nonfiction): The first week of the unit should be used to generate excitement about the nonfiction genre. At the beginning of week, expose students to the various nonfiction types and their structures. Share short excerpts from each type in order to examine the features.



Narrative Nonfiction (Profiles in Success Part I): Explore the alternative concepts of success as they exist in these two suggested shared texts. *The Pact* is an inspirational autobiography of three young men who overcame great odds to become doctors. *Three Cups of Tea* tells the story of Greg Mortenson’s pursuit to open schools in Pakistan.



Narrative Nonfiction (Profiles in Success Part II): Allow students to explore various individuals and select one individual to explore, considering how this person fits into a model of “success.” *Examples: One More River to Cross, Into the Wild, Celebrity Bios, Adventure/Survival Story Excerpts*

Project Options: (Weeks 1 & 2)

Option #1: Nonfiction Features Booklet

Now that you have seen a variety of nonfiction texts, from pamphlets to maps to biographies, create a **booklet** (individually or as a class) or a “passport to nonfiction” that depicts the various features that are unique to nonfiction. For example, you might include a table of contents that leads the reader to features such as charts, graphs, pictures with captions, a glossary, etc.

Option #2: “Home-Grown Bio” (Mini-Oral History Project)

Not everyone has to climb Mount Everest or be a leader in the Civil Rights Movement to demonstrate a spirit of adventure, courage and survival in their own lives (even in the smallest way). Write a biography based on someone you have encountered (relative, friend, teacher, etc.) in your life who fits a profile similar to the “characters” we have experienced in the texts these past couple of weeks. Show the reader how your person was able to overcome an obstacle in his/her life and emerge victorious. *Preparation:* Develop interview questions for this person that will best show how they were able to overcome an obstacle in their life.



Links for examples of oral history projects that can be modified and adapted for your instructional needs can be found in the Appendix.

Content Questions:

- ❖ What is success?
- ❖ Why does defining success in our lives matter?
- ❖ How might our personal definition of success affect the lives of others or be important for the world?

Strategies/Connections

Pre-Reading: Use an **Anticipation Guide** (*WKCR*, 74-78) that asks students to agree or disagree with some of the themes, ideas and concepts that will be present in the text. Remember to refer back to them after the lesson to see if the lesson has modified student stances.

During Reading: Use **Character Bulletin Boards** (*WKCR*, 134) to visualize individuals, as well as gather details about what they think, feel, say and do that makes them successful.

After Reading: Use **Somebody Wanted But So** (*WKCR*, 144-152) or **Sketch to Stretch** (*WKCR*, 171-172) to summarize the nonfiction text and to encourage students to interpret the meaning of the text visually and support with evidence.

Introduce vocabulary:









- **central idea** and **text evidence**



Social Emotional Connection

We can use these stories of courage and survival to:

- ✚ Motivate our students to strive for greatness in their personal lives (in any small way)
- ✚ Encourage our students to face adverse situations courageously and with purpose

Non-Fiction Unit Week 1: Narrative	
Introduction to Nonfiction Narrative: Stories of Success Part I	
Formative Assessment	
After reading a variety of nonfiction selections, students will answer multiple choice questions and describe the defining features of nonfiction texts.	
Focus Questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How can I connect to a nonfiction text? ❖ How can reading and analyzing non-fiction and informational texts make me a better writer of those types of texts? 	
Teaching Objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to define nonfiction and identify the different types of nonfiction writing (<i>PP</i>, 139; <i>T</i>, 516). Students will be able to compare and contrast the features of fiction and nonfiction by asking, “How is nonfiction different from fiction? How is it similar?” (<i>PP</i>, 139; <i>T</i>, 516-520). Students will be able to infer what the book or article will be about by looking across the cover/photos, title, table of contents and blurbs (<i>PP</i>, 68, 130; <i>T</i>, 83, 84; <i>WKCR</i>, 61). Students will be able to make connections to the topic by activating prior knowledge, and asking, “What do I already know or have I already heard about this topic?” (<i>PP</i>, 76, 90; <i>T</i>, 83, 84, 89; <i>WKCR</i>, 74, 80). Students will be able to compare and contrast what they already know to what they are reading by asking, “Does this match up with what I thought?” (<i>PP</i>, 76, 90; <i>T</i>, 89, 106, 212, 229; <i>WKCR</i>, 74, 80, 132). 	
Possible Activities & Support	Possible Assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chart: Characteristics of Fiction vs. Nonfiction ○ Chart: Types of Fiction vs. Nonfiction ○ Chart: Feature/Purpose (<i>STW</i>, 160) ○ Chart to explore findings (e.g., K-W-L) ○ Code text “L” when learning something new about a topic and * for important information (<i>STW</i>, 165) ○ Types: Use evidence to identify the 3 types of non-fiction ○ Making Predictions: Use book covers, pictures, and captions to predict the outcome of a text ○ Create Character Bulletin Boards (<i>WKCR</i>, 137) ○ Write a journal entry/letter from the stance of a person in the biography or article 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quiz: Features of nonfiction ○ Quiz: Types of nonfiction ○ Graphic Organizer- Fill in “L” of K-W-L Chart with information that confirms or contradicts opinions ○ Poster that compares and contrasts fiction and nonfiction
	<p>Projects (See Week 1 Rationale)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nonfiction Features Booklet ○ Bio/Mini Oral History Project <p>Extension: Turn a nonfiction piece into a fictional piece and vice versa.</p>
Vocabulary	Suggested Texts
<p>Nonfiction, Essay, Inference, Features, biography, autobiography, memoir, argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Central idea  Text Evidence  Narrative  Expository  Persuasive 	<p> “Nonfiction Street fair”: Various NF</p> <p>Media clip: “The Resident”</p>
	<p> The Pact, Drs. Davis, Jenkins and Hunt</p> <p>Three Cups of Tea, Mortenson and Relin</p> <p>How to Be Like Mike, Pat Williams</p> <p> Dare to Dream: Stories of 16 People Who Became Somebody, William O’Malley</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the following Common Core ELA Standards: RSI 5, RSI 3, RSI 7 	

Week 2 Rationale: Organizing and Summarizing

Determining Importance

When reading nonfiction, it is impossible to remember every fact and detail. We need to guide students in sorting essential from non-essential information. Take note of nonfiction cues for important information. Refer back to Week One and those all-important features that nonfiction texts offer to alert students to important details. Features like titles, headings, subheadings, captions, text boxes, and *italicized* or **bolded** words are signals that information is important (possibly the central idea of a piece) and should be attended to. Use a Text Feature Walk (Appendix) to engage students in the features of a text as a pre-reading activity.

Stephanie Harvey suggests the following strategies for sifting information to focus on what is important (STW, 157):

- **Overviewing**- a method of skimming and scanning text prior to reading that allows students to do such things as: note important headings, determine what to ignore and decide to quit if information is not relevant.
- **Highlighting and Notetaking**- method for selecting main ideas and supporting details, questioning and responding to the text. Sticky notes can also be used to jot down information on the spot and later rearranged to organize information, ideas, and evidence.
- **Summarizing**-Consider using a “*Boxes and Bullets*” approach. The boxes represent the main idea, or topic of a piece of text (paragraph, essay, article, etc.), while the bullets are used to record the supporting details for each main idea.

Students can then figure out the main idea of an entire nonfiction piece by examining how one paragraph connects to another, whether the two paragraphs continue to build on one main idea or whether the next paragraph takes a turn, introducing a new main idea.



Nonfiction texts may not always contain section dividers, making the discovery of new topics and ideas tricky. Encourage students to be very attentive to transitions (See Appendix) in the text to notice when new subtopics appear.



Formative Assessment

The Week 2 Formative Assessment reflects all of the concepts and skills that have been taught throughout the week. Although students will not see the story or the *content* of the formative assessment until the end of the week, they should have multiple opportunities to “practice” the *form* of the assessment. Use the same types of questions, graphic organizers and writing samples with other nonfiction texts throughout the week, so that students are prepared to succeed.

After administering the assessment, use the provided scoring key and rubric to assess students' performance. Analyze the results of Week 2 Formative Assessment in order to:

- 1) Identify concepts that need to be re-taught during Week 3 ("Teach and Re-teach," T, 448, 459).
- 2) Highlight Week 2 examples of **summarizing and making connections**.
- 3) Use Week 2 Rubric for self and peer assessment.



Suggested Texts (See Week 1)

Narrative: "Stories of Success" Part II

This week, continue to focus on autobiographical/biographical text and excerpts that highlight the human spirit and motivate students to consider their own capacity for adventure, survival, and success. Encourage them to connect to the experiences of the individuals in nonfiction texts in the same way they might connect with characters in fiction texts. Remind them that these are REAL people who went through very difficult times and persisted to emerge victorious. Explore issues of success. What does it mean to be successful? What qualities are required for success? What have these characters taught us about this topic?

Project Options: (See Week 1 Unit Map)

Strategies/Connections

During Reading: Use **Think Aloud** (WKCR, 122-127) to guide students through text in a meaningful way, sorting important details that can later be used for effective summarizing.

After Reading: Use **Somebody Wanted But So** (WKCR, 144-152) or **Sketch to Stretch** (WKCR, 171-172) to summarize the nonfiction text and to encourage students to interpret the meaning of the text visually and support with evidence.



Social Emotional Connection

The "Homegrown Bio" Oral History Project can be a way for students to learn more about an important person in their lives and give them pause for reflection about their own paths and the choices they make.

Content Questions:

- Have these individuals achieved success? Why or why not?
- What ideas about success have you confirmed? Has your vision of "success" changed?
- What attributes are necessary to achieve success?
- Which qualities did these individuals possess to achieve success?
- Is there always one clear pathway to success? How do the pathways differ among the individuals?
- What role do obstacles play in the path to success?



Content Questions can be used as an activity or as an assessment. Or have students create content or assessment questions based on the topics of the week.

Non-Fiction Unit Week 2: Narrative

Summarize and Organize/Stories of Success Part II

Formative Assessment

After reading “Sam on Perseverance” from *The Pact*, students will answer multiple choice questions and use the most specific and relevant information to summarize the passage.

Focus Questions

- ❖ How do I sort relevant from non-relevant information?
- ❖ How do I avoid retelling when I summarize?
- ❖ What questions help me better understand what I read?

Teaching Objectives

- Students will be able to **determine the importance** of information in nonfiction text by **sorting** the most important information from less important details (*T*, 91, 108, 112; *WKCR*, 133, 127).
- Students will be able to **summarize** information in nonfiction text by highlighting important details and taking notes (*T* 91, 108, 112; *WKCR* 133, 127).
- Students will be able to **make connections and generate ideas** by asking, “What does this make me think about?” Maybe it reminds us of something else or we might have a new idea (*PP*, 76, 90; *T*, 89).
- Students will be able to take notes to make sense of information as they read nonfiction. We can **organize** information to help us better understand the text by illustrating it in a list, timeline, t-chart, chart, drawing, graph, diagram, etc. We make sure to choose the graphic organizer that is appropriate for the information (*PP*, 119; *T*, 161-193, 112; *WKCR*, 133, 127).

Possible Activities & Support

- “Overviewing” (*STW*, 157-159)
- Cornell Note-taking System (Appendix)
- “Boxes and Bullets” (Appendix)
- Paraphrasing and “What’s Interesting vs. What’s Important” (*STW*, 182-183)
- “What the Piece is About/What it Makes me Think About” (*STW*, 188)
- Facts and Questions (*STW*, 171)
- Three sticky notes with * to find the main ideas (*STW*, 166)
- “Becoming Thieves” (Appendix)
- Expanding Vocabulary (*NM*, 80-81)
- List of General and Specific Questions (*T*, 516)

Possible Assessments





- Defend stance about main ideas (on sticky notes) (*STW*, 166)
- Journaling: Travelogue outlining a mini-adventure
- Passport of Nonfiction travels
- Timeline/Storyboard of Events in Character’s Life
- Memorable Event: Turn a scene from one of the biographies into a script and act it out
- Content Questions as Assessment

Projects (See Week 1 Rationale)

- Nonfiction Features Booklet
- Homegrown Bio/Mini Oral History Project

Vocabulary

Summarize, organize, **relevant**, **specific**, attributes

-  **Central idea, evidence**
-  **Objective**
-  **Biased/unbiased**
-  **Voice**

Suggested Texts



Poem: “Success” by Ralph Waldo Emerson



Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story, Ben Carson
It’s Not About the Bike, Lance Armstrong
Hope in the Unseen, Ron Suskind



Voices of Hope, Giraffe Heroes Project

- Addresses the following **Common Core ELA Standards:** RSI 1, RSI 2, RSI 3, RSI 4, RSI 5

Week 3 Rationale: Making Meaning from Nonfiction Text

Visuals

Nonfiction writers often communicate information to their readers in ways other than through the written word. As Harvey writes, “Nonfiction picture books and young adult magazines and newspapers fire kids up, especially if text quality matches the compelling photographs, charts, and illustrations” (*STW*, 156).

A nonfiction text might contain charts, graphic organizers, maps, drawings, diagrams, timelines, and other visual representations of information. These “visuals” can be highly motivating for students, as well as allow them to enter into a text at various points. They can skim and scan for information in a non-prescribed way, as it interests them.

Examples of Visuals (See Weekly Objectives)

- ✓ **Pictures, Drawings or Photographs** - When we look at pictures, the first thing we do is read any title and/or caption. We ask, “What is this picture showing? What does this picture help me understand better?” (*T*, 137).
- ✓ **Charts and Graphs**- Charts and graphs often show how two factors relate to each other, implying that one might cause the other or they may compare different results. When we look at charts and graphs, the first thing we do is read any title and/or caption to understand what they are measuring or comparing. We ask, “What is the chart showing? Which has more/is more and why is that important to the article?” (*T*, 157).
- ✓ **Maps**- Maps might be used to show travel routes, landmarks, distances, natural resources, people who populate the land, the type of land, and trends happening in a particular area. The first thing we do when we read a map is look for titles, captions, keys and legends to understand what the map is showing us. We ask, “Why is this map important to the article?” (*T*, 153).
- ✓ **Cartoons/Sketches** -Cartoons, especially political cartoons, are often used to make fun of a public figure or a public event. The first thing we do when we read cartoons is look to any title or caption. We then work to figure out who is in the cartoon and what they are doing. We look for clues—words or symbols—to help us identify the characters. We ask, “What is the event/issue that the author is commenting on? Cartoons often use exaggeration to make a statement; we look for exaggeration and ask, “What are they saying about the event/issue/person?” (*T*, 148).
- ✓ **Timelines**- We look to timelines to organize historical information sequentially and often point out important dates of change. We read a timeline from left to right: the earliest date is on the left and the most recent date is on the right. We ask ourselves, “What does the sequence of events show me?” (*T*, 157).

Teaching Others

Students can synthesize their learning of nonfiction text by teaching someone else about the topic. This will make them accountable for their reading, because they know they will have to explain the main ideas and details of the text to someone else in a way that makes sense. Students must read in such a way that they can take quick, rough notes that capture the gist of something they read then pause after each section to quickly paraphrase. The Double Entry Journal is a helpful notetaker for collecting thoughts (*WKCR*, 127-129). Then, students mark main ideas and use the notes to develop their interpretation to be shared with a partner.

Teach students how to use the following methods in order to effectively convey information:

- Prepare for teaching by writing out/practicing the details that will be used in teaching
- Point to visuals (charts, diagrams, illustrations) that highlight what you are trying to say
- Introduce and define unfamiliar terms for your partner
- Use eye contact, gestures and a strong, clear voice
- Be helpful with questions and if you do not know the answers find them together

Vocabulary

Clearly, vocabulary instruction should be incorporated throughout. However, students will encounter many new words when reading nonfiction books, particularly those with unfamiliar subjects. Often, in nonfiction, the author includes a glossary to define words. Sometimes these words will be in **bold**. Other times, the author will define a new word right after it appears, so have students read ahead. Finally, using visuals may help them figure out the meaning.

Questions

According to Isabel L. Beck and Margaret G. McLean in the November 2002 edition of *Educational Leadership*, “the instructional approach of continuous questioning enhances reading comprehension by teaching students to actively build understanding as they read and think. In fact, the ability to think — to be a lifelong seeker and integrator of new knowledge — is based on the ability to ask and consider important questions, questions that go beyond recall and stretch student thinking.”



When students develop the questions themselves, they are motivated to also find the answers themselves, and therefore be more likely to “own” and retain the information they find. Having students create test questions is a great way to get them involved in assessment.



Formative Assessment (See Weeks 1 and 2)

After administering the assessment, use the provided scoring key and rubric to assess students' performance. Analyze the results of Week 3 Formative Assessment in order to:

- 1) Identify concepts that need to be re-taught during Week 4 (“Teach and Re-teach,” *T*, 448, 459).
- 2) Highlight Week 3 examples of **analyzing visuals**.
- 3) Use Week 3 Rubric for self and peer assessment.



Suggested Texts (Weeks 3 & 4-Expository):

“All About” Success and “How to” Achieve it

The next two weeks focus on the “all about” and “how to” forms of expository text. As with Weeks 1 and 2, allow your students the range of shared texts, balanced with the freedom of individual choice, so that they can explore their own interests.

The “All-About” type of **expository text** contains a mix of facts about someone or something and is largely informational and does not contain explicit author opinions and bias, while the “How-to” type describes a process of how to do something. Often included are lists of procedures and/or steps to follow.



Teen Self-Help Guides: *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, *What Color is Your Parachute*, *Stay Strong*, *Teens Can Make it Happen*, *Fighting Invisible Tigers*



See Project options: Create nonfiction materials (e.g., encyclopedias, maps, brochures, instructional manuals, etc.).

Project Options: (Weeks 3 & 4)

Option #1: Mini “I-Search” on Success







Part I: “All-About” Success: Present your findings about the definitions of success so far. (Students may present information orally or with a written piece). Display your findings by using visual examples, as well. What does it mean to be successful? How can we achieve this in our lives? Use evidence from biographies and firsthand accounts about individuals who fit in with your definition of “success.” Use **specific and relevant evidence** from the text (Weeks 1-3) to support your conclusions. Try to maintain an *objective, unbiased* voice in your presentation.

Part II: “How-To” Guide on Success: Using the most **specific and relevant evidence** from the narrative pieces you have read, as well as information from the “How-To” guides, put together a presentation that gives a *step-by-step* or *point-by-point* approach to achieving success.

Option #2: “Teaching Booklets”

Part I (All-About): Consider something you really want to learn how to do (e.g., play chess, compose music, scuba dive, etc.) Your topic might be driven by a question that you have developed after reading biographical accounts. For example, after reading an excerpt from *Into Thin Air*, you might have questions about the training required for mountain climbing at high elevations. After choosing your topic, read “all about” it in various expository texts and record the most **relevant and specific** information to help someone else understand the topic.

Part II (How To): Next, read a “How To” guide on this topic (e.g., *Guitar for Dummies*) that will give you step by step information about it. Finally, create a “Teaching Booklet” that can be used to inform others about your topic of choice. You may be required to present this information to a partner or before a larger audience, so it is important to have really absorbed the information so that you can then speak knowledgeably and clearly about it.

Non-Fiction Unit Week 3: Expository	
Making Meaning from Nonfiction Text/All About Success and How To Achieve it	
Formative Assessment	
After reading excerpts from <i>The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens</i> , answer multiple choice questions and respond to short answer prompts.	
Focus Questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How do visuals assist my understanding of a text? ❖ How do I approach unknown vocabulary in a nonfiction text? ❖ What role does questioning play in helping me make meaning of text? ❖ What is this text trying to teach me? 	
Teaching Objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to use visuals, such as pictures, drawings, photographs, charts, graphs, maps, cartoons and timelines to better understand what they are reading (<i>T</i>, 137, 148, 153, 157). Students will be able to infer the meaning of difficult vocabulary words without looking at a dictionary (<i>PP</i>, 228; <i>T</i>, 115-135; <i>WKCR</i>, 183). Students will be able to form questions as they read nonfiction. Nonfiction readers should be forming questions in their mind as they read about new information. Pay attention to those questions and read ahead to answer them. If the article doesn't answer them, look for another source (<i>PP</i>, 100; <i>T</i>, 106). 	
Possible Activities & Support	Possible Assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Wonder Books” (<i>NM</i>, 16-22) List of General and Specific Questions for nonfiction text (<i>T</i>, 516) List of “specialist topics” (<i>NM</i>, 163) “One word” Essays (Appendix) “Captioning Art” (Appendix) Interview based on interview questions about success “Using a Highlighter” approach to Vocabulary (Appendix) Use interviews to produce graphs/timelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a visual (timeline, picture, chart or graph) and description to depict a concept about success (i.e. timeline of person's individual path to success, chart about what success means based on interview questions, etc.). <p>Extension: Create additional visuals that would aid an author in getting his message across (e.g., cartoon, diagram, or caption).</p>
	<p>Projects (See Week 3 Rationale)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini “I-Search” on Success “Teaching Booklets” about a topic of interest that can be presented to a partner or the class
Vocabulary	Suggested Texts
Visuals, diagram, graph, timeline, caption, context  interpret, evidence  infer/inferences  determine	 Media Images (e.g., commercials, videos, advertisements, pop-ups) depicting how to achieve “success”
	 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens , Sean Covey Flow , Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi Learning and Motivation Strategies , Bruce Tuckman  Self-selected “all-about” and “how to” texts
Addresses the following Common Core ELA Standards : RSI 4, RSI7	

Week 4 Rationale: Summarize, Organize and Synthesize

Summarizing: Explicit vs. Implicit Main Idea

In order to fully understand a nonfiction piece, students must be able to pull details together to identify the main idea. When they read nonfiction, they will often be asked, “What is the main idea?” What that question really means is, “What is this mostly about?” They need to be able to answer that question in a **full sentence-phrases are not main ideas**.

- When considering the main idea students should understand that sometimes the answer is given to us, but sometimes it is NOT. Each paragraph might be mostly about something different, so we have to create one broad sentence that encompasses them all. We summarize what the article is saying overall to create a main idea (*PP*, 103; *T*, 177).
- Students will be able to organize information as they read nonfiction. There is often too much information to keep track of in our minds so we have to create a way to organize/manage information. When distinguishing between main ideas and details, ask, “Can this information be *a part of* this other information?” If the answer is yes, it is a detail—a piece of a larger idea; if it cannot be combined it is a main idea (*PP*, 103; *T*, 177).

Questions (Part II)

Good questioning techniques allow students to delve deeper into text to uncover the meaning or bias that may exist behind the author’s literal words. Asking thoughtful questions enables students to access/analyze explicit and implicit information and to draw well-founded conclusions. They can determine, “This is what the author is telling me outright” (**explicit**) or read more closely to infer, “This is what the author *really* wants me to know but might not tell me directly” (**implicit**).



Formative Assessment (See Week 1 Description)

After administering the assessment, use the provided scoring key and rubric to assess students’ performance. Analyze the results of Week 4 Formative Assessment in order to:

- 1) Identify concepts that need to be re-taught during Week 5 (*T*, 448, 459).
- 2) Highlight Week 4 examples of **organizing**, **summarizing** and **synthesizing** information.
- 3) Use rubric from Week 4 for self and peer assessment.











Suggested Texts

The suggested texts offer a range of perspectives on personal and societal success, views on what it means, and how it can be achieved. Choose texts that have **explicit** arguments that can be traced by students and compare these texts with those that offer **implicit** arguments. Have students compare what they have learned with their preconceived and continually developing perceptions of success to prepare to develop their “position statements” in Week 6.

Content Focus Questions:

- Is innate talent necessary for success?
- Has my position changed about what it means to be successful?
- What is the profile of a successful person who can impact both self *and* society?

Nonfiction Unit Week 4: Expository	
Summarize, Organize and Synthesize/All About Success and How To Achieve it Part II	
Formative Assessment	
After reading the article, “What it Takes to be Great,” students will answer multiple choice questions and <i>analyze</i> how the <i>central idea</i> regarding the importance of deliberate practice is <i>conveyed through supporting ideas</i> and <i>developed over the course of the text</i> .	
Focus Questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Why are organizational patterns essential in the understanding of nonfiction text? ❖ How should we use evidence from the text to show our understanding of that text? 	
Teaching Objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to determine the explicit and implicit central idea of the nonfiction text. Students will be able to analyze how paragraphs are related to each other by asking “Is this paragraph presenting new information, or is it elaborating on the previous paragraph?” (PP, 103; T, 91, 112). Students will be able to synthesize as they read nonfiction. When we read nonfiction and learn new information, we ask ourselves, “How does this fit with what I already know about this subject?” If the information doesn’t match up, find another source and start talking to people about it (PP, 103; T, 89, 91). Students will be able to develop a main idea statement about information in the text. Students will be able to use text evidence to support the main idea statement and central idea. 	
Possible Activities & Support	Possible Assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boxes and Bullets: Using boxes to identify central idea and bullets for supporting details (GO) “Break it Down” → “Pull it Together”: One-sentence summaries for each paragraph Summarize whole text in one sentence School Community Survey/interview – What does success mean? Who is successful? Why? Explicit (E) or Implicit (I)? Determine whether main idea is <i>E</i> or <i>I</i> and support w/ evidence Confirmed or Challenged? Share how ideas about success have been confirmed or challenged based on evidence thus far 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Success” Presentations (T, 304-308) Topics, Details + Response (STW, 168) Content Questions as Assessment Explicit vs. Implicit Central idea Quiz Quiz: “Break it Down” and “Pull it Together” Class Debate: Which are better implicit or explicit main ideas? Use examples from the texts.
	Projects (See Week 3 Rationale) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini “I-Search” on Success “Teaching Booklets” presented to a partner/class Write a group nonfiction piece with an explicit main idea. Write the same piece but make the meaning implicit.
Vocabulary	Suggested Texts
Perspective, organize, summarize, tone  Explicit/Implicit  main idea statement  central idea  convey  synthesize	 Media Clip: Obama Speech, “The Audacity of Hope”
	 The Audacity of Hope , Barack Obama Outliers , Malcolm Gladwell  Self-selected “all-about” and “how to” texts
Addresses the following Common Core ELA Standards: RSI 5, RSI 10,	

Week 5 Rationale: Talking to the Text/Tracing the Argument

Great readers “Talk to the Text,” (See the nonfiction pamphlet for a text marking guide. For extra support have students use the guide as a bookmark) by asking questions, forming opinions, making connections. Students can understand the meaning of an article more deeply by examining the writer’s **background, purpose, style, perspective, and audience**. Students need to be able to look critically at all information that is presented as facts. While the author may include factual information in his piece, the manner in which facts are presented can influence the meaning of them to a reader. Students might have strong emotional responses to the text, agree or disagree with the viewpoints, even choose to act upon their thoughts and opinions (See Week 5 Graphic Organizers for examples of how to collect these ideas).

Author’s Purpose/Intended Audience

Although nonfiction is defined as “writing that conveys factual information and is not primarily work of the creative imagination,” we want students to understand that nonfiction writers also have a purpose for writing. We want students to ask, “Why is the author writing this? To inform me about something? To entertain me? To persuade me to believe something?”

Although not every nonfiction piece has a *bias* or *slant*, a message is often implicit, indicating what an author thinks and how he feels about a given topic. This message may have the unintended (or intended) consequence of convincing the reader to think and believe in the same way. We want students to approach every text critically, challenging them to “debate the author” by questioning the message and disputing information in order to agree or disagree.

Facts vs. Opinions (Objective vs. Subjective)

When students are able to separate facts from opinions in nonfiction articles, they form the basis for being able to recognize **slant** and **subtext** (Week 6). This can be a challenging task in nonfiction articles, because many claim to take an objective stance, when in reality they are conveying their opinions in implicit ways. Gradually increase the complexity of texts in order to build students’ skills and capacity.



Have students compare different articles on the same topic in a newspaper (e.g., front page article vs. editorial) to highlight this skill.

Tracing the Argument

Guide students in tracing the author’s line of argument by having them extract it from each piece (this will prepare them for writing their own essay in Week 6). Use various argumentative and editorial pieces and have them “plug in” different components of the argument, including:

Context: What is at stake? Why is this important?

Position Statement: Overall position or stance on the issue (Explain that this is similar to the central idea from Weeks 1-4).

Claims and Evidence: Specific reasons author uses to defend position statement

Counterclaims: Claims and evidence that the opposing argument might have

Conclusion: Author’s closing remarks or thoughts

Making Connections

Stephanie Harvey reminds us that “We want our students to know that nothing matters more than their thinking when they read, and giving them an opportunity to consider what they think is most important serves that goal. But we also want them to recognize that nonfiction writers have something in mind that they are trying to convey to the reader and that it is the reader’s responsibility to pick up on that, as well.” (STW, 167)



Formative Assessment (See Week 1 Description)

After administering the Week 5 assessment, use the provided scoring key and rubric to assess students’ performance. Analyze the results of Week 5 Formative Assessment in order to:

- 1) Identify concepts that need to be re-taught during Week 6 (“Teach and Re-teach,” T, 448, 459).
- 2) Highlight Week 5 examples of exemplary analysis of author’s perspective and viewpoint, as well as tracing of the argument.
- 3) Use the Week 5 Rubric for self and peer assessment.



Suggested Texts (Persuasive/Argument)

Over the next two weeks, expose students to a multitude of **persuasive pieces (articles, speeches, images, advertisements)** that answer the question “What does it mean to be successful?” Elicit responses from students, both intellectual and emotional. We are overwhelmed by a barrage of information that calls upon us to believe in a certain image of success. Many times, these images and messages contradict one another. Is success defined by innovation and entrepreneurship, as it was in President Obama’s 2011 speech to businessmen and women in Cleveland? Or has it been achieved only after we can put our name on countless properties like Donald Trump? Or is success determined by one’s character, and the impression it makes upon those closest to him/her like Ghandi?



Projects (Weeks 5 and 6)

Option #1: “Motivational Speech”: Sell your method! Imagine you have an audience of teens anxious to hear your method of achieving success. Create an advertisement, essay or speech that persuades your audience to believe in your approach. Use **evidence** in the form of text and/or visuals (pictures, captions, etc.) in order to defend your position.

Content Questions:

- How has the definition of success changed over time? (Use timelines and other visuals to explore).
- Would you change this definition if you had the opportunity? How?
- Is there a “right” pathway to success? Choose an individual from the readings whom you most admire for his/her path to success and defend his/her decisions.

Nonfiction Unit Week 5: Persuasive Talking to the Text/Tracing the Argument

Formative Assessment

After reading “Why Chinese Mothers are Superior,” students will answer multiple choice questions and *trace* the line of *argument* in the article.

Focus Questions

- ❖ Why did the author choose to write this?
- ❖ What does the writer want me to understand, think or believe?
- ❖ How does an author create meaning in a non-fiction or informational text?
- ❖ What reading strategies help us determine meaning from a text?

Teaching Objectives

- Students will be able to **determine the author’s purpose** for writing the piece (to inform, entertain, persuade, etc.) by looking at **subtext**. As we read nonfiction, we think about what the author is saying explicitly as well as what the text is saying implicitly.
- Students will be able to determine **author’s point of view** in a nonfiction piece.
- Students will be able to **determine the intended audience** of the text, asking “Who was the author intending to write this piece for? To whom is the message directed?”
- Students will be able to **distinguish fact from opinion** in a nonfiction piece.
- Students will be able to **make connections and generate ideas** as they read nonfiction by asking, “What does this make me think about?” Maybe the article creates an emotional response. We stop often and ask, “How do I feel as I read this article? What parts surprised me? What made me feel sad? Nervous? In awe? Frustrated?” Then we determine why. Maybe it reminds us of something else or we might have a new idea (*PP*, 76, 90; *T*, 89).

Possible Activities & Support

- Tracing the Argument: Structure of an Argument Essay
- “Important to Whom?” Distinguish between what the student finds most important vs. what writer most wants them to take away from article (*STW*, 167)
- FQR Chart (*STW*, 171-173)
- “Reasoning Through Text” (*STW*, 173-174)
- “Panel Discussions” (*T*, 309)
- Movie Trailers to teach Persuasion (Appendix)


Possible Assessments

- Quiz: Facts vs. Opinions-choose a text and graphic organizer
 - Double Entry Journals/It Says, I Say (*WKCR*, 127-9)
 - Biography Author’s Purpose Discussion/Debate (*T*, 520-521)
- Extension:** After completing the Week 5 Formative Assessment, write a letter to Amy Chua, in which you agree or disagree with the ideas and concepts expressed in the article and explain why.


Projects


“Motivational Speech”: Sell your method! Create an advertisement, essay or speech that persuades your audience to believe in your approach to success. (See Week 5 Rationale)

Vocabulary

-  Slant, subtext, fact, opinion, argue, point of view, intended audience, trace, context, position statement, claim, counterclaim, bias

Suggested Texts

 **Commercials:** clips with clear messages about success

 **Outliers**, Malcolm Gladwell

The Mole People, Jennifer Toth

Articles, Ads, Speeches: *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Time*

Addresses the following **Common Core ELA Standards:** RSI 1, RSI 7, RSI 8, RSI 9,

Week 6 Rationale: Author's Purpose and Perspective/The Argument Essay

As the unit comes to a close, your students should emerge with the ability to approach nonfiction texts with confidence and to defend their claims based on **textual evidence**. They should gain an appreciation for the various types of nonfiction text (narrative, expository, and persuasive). Finally, they should envision themselves as writers and researchers, able to sift through information to extract the most important details and exclude the extraneous information that will not serve to defend their position. By analyzing and responding to the various forms of nonfiction text in this unit, your students have learned to write for an audience and with a purpose.

Purpose of the Argument Essay

Argument essays require students to explore more than one side of an issue and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the different sides in order to champion one perspective over another. In the essay, they should point to the counter-argument and acknowledge that reasonable and intelligent people might very well have a different perspective.

The goals for your students as writers of an argument essay are:

- 1) To persuade and move the audience to accept his/her position on an issue (a difficult challenge that requires a good deal of support).
- 2) To defend his/her position with **text evidence** from multiple sources.
- 3) To acknowledge the **counter-argument**, if only to refute it with further evidence.

Structure of the Argument Essay (See Week 6 Graphic Organizers)

- I. Context:** Explain what's at stake: Why does it matter? Is it attention-grabbing?

Why is it important to have a definition of success and how to achieve it (on a personal and societal level)?

Avoid: "This paper will be about..." or "I'm going to write about..."

- II. Position Statement:** Develop your overall position on the issue (like a central idea).

Avoid: "I think..." or "I believe..."

- III. Claims and Evidence:** Defend your position with more specific reasons.

Defend your claims (with interviews, observations, research data, newspaper reports, etc.).

- IV. Discussion of Counterclaims:** Make reference to other ideas/theories on the subject.

Avoid: Giving too much or too little credit to opposition

- V. Thoughtful Conclusion:** Show how all of the information you have gathered about success has challenged or confirmed your thinking.

Avoid: "So this is what I think..." or "This is the end of my essay..."

Comparing Perspectives (Explicit vs. Implicit Arguments)

Use the table from Week 5, where students collected information about the various arguments about success. Some authors have clear and **explicit** arguments, clearly defined position statements and claims, while for other writers, the message may be **implicit**, and it is up to us as readers to uncover the beliefs and values behind the words.

Compare different authors' perspectives about success and how it is achieved. Have them determine whether the arguments are implicit or explicit. If the arguments are explicit and purposeful, have them explore the strengths and weaknesses. They will be able to use these analyses to develop their own positions about success for the argument essay at the end of the week.



Consider using the table below (See Week 6 Graphic Organizers) to have students compare the arguments about success that have been put forth (either explicitly or implicitly) by the various texts they have encountered. Have them develop personal responses to these arguments. They will use these during Week 6 in order to *compare* the arguments and compose their argument essay.

Person or Group	Believe(s) Success is...	It can be achieved by...	Text Evidence
Malcolm Gladwell <i>Outliers</i>			
Sean Covey <i>7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens</i>			
Greg Mortenson <i>Three Cups of Tea</i>			
Advertisements			

Forming Opinions Based on Text Evidence

With the rapid developments in technology, our world is becoming more and more complex. More than any other generation, we have an overload of information available to us at the click of a button. Therefore, we need to enable our students to become critical examiners of what they read, constantly asking questions to ascertain the validity, relevance and bias of the information they encounter. We need to help them form opinions based on **text evidence**, rather than how they feel or what they think about a given subject.

Developing and Defending Claims

Guide them in developing claims that will be grounded in *evidence* rather than *opinion*.

Example of an organizer to use to gather ideas:

My Position Statement:	
Claim #1:	Evidence:
Claim #2:	Evidence:
Claim #3:	Evidence:



Use a classroom (or partner) debate to enable students to defend and refute an article or nonfiction piece. Make sure to establish debating “ground rules” prior to the activity, so that the experience is positive and educative. And be sure students ground their argument in text evidence!



Summative Assessment

For this final assessment, it is time to “remove the scaffold” and allow students to do more on their own. They have now been exposed to multiple nonfiction texts and images that address the concepts they will be arguing about. This week and the final assessment should be viewed as an opportunity for your students to showcase what they have mastered over the course of the unit. You and your students should end the unit with a sense of accomplishment!

***Note:** For students who enter class on the day of the exam. If a student is struggling to write the argument essay because he does not have the background from prior weeks, you can allow him to write using evidence from personal experience to defend his position about success.

If students have mastered each week’s objectives and the formative assessments have been truly used as tools to inform instruction, then the summative assessment has “potential as a learning tool by giving students goals and deadlines, helping set standards for student achievement” (T, 443).

Refer to Week 5 Formative Assessment in order to:

- 1) Review “Steps of the Writing Process”
- 2) Highlight examples of an Exemplary Analysis of an Argument
- 3) Have students self and peer-assess, checking to see that criteria have been met (Using Week 5 Rubric and student sample Formative Assessments)

After administering the Week 6 Summative Assessment, use the provided scoring key and rubric to assess your students’ performance. Analyze the results of Week 6 Summative Assessment in order to...

Celebrate!

Reward student achievement on the Summative Assessment in a meaningful way.

Examples:

- ✓ Host an Awards Ceremony-Awards for various rubric categories (i.e., Terrific Themes, Stellar Support, Guru of Grammar)
- ✓ “Publish” student work (Class Newspaper, Magazine, Blog, or Website)



Suggested Texts

Media Clip (Cornell West: “Success vs. Greatness”)

Launch this final week with a media clip by leading intellectual and champion for racial justice, Cornell West. He proposes that the modern definition of **success** is “financial prosperity” and “personal security.” He thinks there is a problem with this modern definition and contends that **greatness** is what is needed in our society. “Greatness,” according to him, is defined by “moral integrity” and “magnanimity-care for others beyond yourself.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfTQj0egauA>



Have students listen and respond to this piece prior to the Summative Assessment. Guide them in considering how West’s definition of success impacts their personal definition. How might it have reshaped their thinking. Encourage them to consider his viewpoints in preparation for their argument essay.

Content Questions:

- What are the implications for having a society that favors West’s definition of success over greatness?
- How do you persuade others to live a life of greatness vs. success?
- What are the purposes of success without greatness?

Non-Fiction Unit Week 6: Persuasive Author's Purpose and Perspective /The Argument Essay

Summative Assessment

Students answer multiple choice questions, comparing the perspectives of various authors and write an argument for a modern definition of success, using text evidence for support.

Focus Questions

- ❖ How does the author's perspective influence the meaning?
- ❖ Why are format, style, tone, and point of view important in nonfiction writing?
- ❖ How does an author of informational text/nonfiction use logic, evidence, and rhetorical devices to persuade?
- ❖ How do persuasive messages, both explicit and implicit, shape our ideas, values, beliefs, and/or behaviors?
- ❖ How does a reader identify author bias and determine the validity of an informational text?

Teaching Objectives

- Students will be able to **determine the author's purpose** by using **style, tone and perspective**. When we think about the author's purpose, one thing we can think about is the author's tone during different parts of the article. The author may use harsh, quick and negative words when referring to one thing and then use soft, long and positive words when referring to something else (*T*, 507; *WKCR*, 136).
- Students will be able to **recognize bias** in nonfiction writing. When we think about the author's purpose it is also important to think about a larger group that he is representing. We ask, "Who is he speaking for? Whose voice and perspective are being heard? Who might benefit from this perspective? Whose voices are not heard? Whose perspectives are not represented? Why?" (*T*, 106).
- Students will be able to **defend** claims by using evidence from the text for support.
- Students will be able to **compare perspectives** of two different authors on a given topic.
- Students will be able to **form opinions using text evidence** and respond to the author with their own ideas and perspective. As we read nonfiction we think about what the author is saying. We ask, "Do I agree with it? What do I think about what the author is saying? Why/why not?" (*T*, 106; *WKCR*, 165).


Possible Activities & Support

- Introduce Argument Format (Context, Position Statement, Claims and Evidence, Counterclaims, Conclusion)
- "Evidence For/Evidence Against/Personal Opinion" (*STW*, 169)
- "Gatekeeper" Activity – Students determine priority of information and number them by importance
- What's the Message? - Use ads (TV, magazine, etc) to determine an author's purpose and message
- Same Topic+Different Authors=Different Messages


Possible Assessments

- Argument Essay Outline/Rough Draft
- "Rebuttal Letter" to the author of an article expressing a counterclaim on a subject
- Class Debate-Establish claims/counterclaims on topic of interest and defend claims with support
- Letters to a company about that company's bias
- Create an advertisement that counters one you disagree with

Vocabulary

Bias, slant, perspective, comparison, style, tone, validity
 context, position statement, claim, counterclaim

Suggested Texts

 **Media Clip:** Cornell West: "Success vs. Greatness"
 Newspaper articles, debates about success

Addresses the following **Common Core ELA Standards:** RSI 9

Notes: